

CRYSTAL Palace, the Football League Division Three club, will sign Wycombe Wanderers striker Steve Perrin today at Selhurst Park. Perrin trained with the club yesterday and is expected to put his signature to a two year contract today.

Negotiations went on over the weekend between the two club managers, Palaces' Malcolm Allison and Wycombe boss Brian Lee. No fee is involved, even though Perrin had signed a contract with the Blues for the coming season. Instead Palace will bring their full first team down to Loakes Park for a game during the coming season.

Perrin is the fourth Wanderer to leave this season and the ninth Wycombe player to join the professional ranks. During his two year spell at Loakes Park he scored a total of 59 goals and played a large part in the club's success.

While one player left the club this week another rejoined them in the shape of John Delaney, who will be playing for the Blues again next season. John spent four seasons with Wanderers before joining Bournemouth on a two year contract in 1973.

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'Offer was too good to refuse'

KEITH SEARLE, Wycombe Wanderers' centre-forward for the last five years, told me this week that he received an offer from Rothmans Isthmian League rivals Enfield "that was too good to refuse." Searle has signed a contract for one season with last term's runners-up (writes Stuart Earp).

Keith told me he was approached by four clubs after last season — Hendon, Ilford, Slough and Enfield. "I considered all of them and told Wycombe what Enfield had offered. They would not match it and so I decided to sign on for Enfield."

Searle, regarded by many as the finest centre-forward in the league and scorer of 24 goals for the Blues last season, said he was sorry to leave Wanderers after five happy years. "As the seasons went on," he said, "I was able to relax and I think played better towards the end of my time. It will be difficult to leave behind players like John Maskell and Tony Horseman and all the lads, but that Enfield offer was too good to refuse."

During his five years with Wycombe the centre-forward scored many important goals, but Keith singled out two as his most memorable — the winner against Hayes in the Amateur Cup quarter-final in 1972 and the title winning goal against Dagenham in the final match last season. He also recalled the F.A. Cup matches against Bournemouth and Middlesbrough with real enjoyment.

He added: "I always had two ambitions in football — to play for England and to play at Wembley — I fulfilled both of them at the same time." Keith was referring to his only England cap when he scored the winning goal against West Germany in the U.E.F.A. Amateur Cup.

For Wanderers, who start training later this month, Searle's decision to leave will come as a telling blow. Manager Brian Lee, who for a long time has rated Searle as the best centre-forward around, described his departure as "disastrous". He was also sorry to see Gary Hand leave the club after one season. Hand returns to his former team-mates at Hendon. The left-back made an important contribution to the club's success last season and will also be hard to replace.

Wanderers, however, have already offered 12 contracts to players and have several newcomers in their squad, although the manager is not prepared to name them for the time being.



One of the 24 goals Keith Searle notched up for Wycombe Wanderers last season. This one came against Barking at Loakes Park.